



## ***AOT in Action***

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good afternoon.

During this past winter, Arizona received an abundance of rainfall. Because of this, we enjoyed beautiful wildflowers and lush vegetation in our parks. However, this vegetation has since dried out and left the parks with a large amount of ground coverage that could easily catch fire, as we have already witnessed with the X fire that occurred in the Tusayan district of the Kaibab National Forest this past week. This fire was extremely close to one of our main tourism attractions, the Grand Canyon, and serves as a harsh reminder of how destructive forest fires can be.

On Monday, May 12, 2008 the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department will initiate a fire ban for Phoenix's mountain/desert preserves in response to extreme fire danger. The ban will affect the entire Phoenix preserve system and will prohibit open wood and charcoal fires within the preserve.

Just remember, as you are out enjoying outdoor activities throughout Arizona, be sure to extinguish all campfires and comply with fire restrictions. Together, we can protect the beauty of our state for generations to come.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## AOT News Flash

### Send in Your Governor's Tourism Award Nominations!

The Arizona Office of Tourism invites you to submit your nominations for the **2008 Governor's Tourism Awards**. These industry awards honor individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions during the past year for the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

The awards will be presented at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson on July 10, 2008.

**All submissions must be received by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2008.**

Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms. For more information, contact Kiva Couchon at 602-364-3724 or via e-mail at [kcouchon@azot.gov](mailto:kcouchon@azot.gov).

To register for the conference please visit, [www.aztourismconference.com](http://www.aztourismconference.com).

### SAVE the DATE: ATU Workshop – How to Create Effective Collateral Material

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop: "**How to Create Effective Collateral Material**."

Are you looking for ways to make your brochures, rack cards, flyers, travel guides and fact sheets stand out from the pack? Do you want to learn how to get the biggest bang for your buck and how to avoid expensive mistakes when producing printed marketing materials? Join us for the next ATU workshop "**How to Create Effective Collateral Materials**" and you will learn about the five key processes in creating brochures, guides and other travel collateral – from project inception to the distribution of your final product. Find out about the best practices in creating collateral materials from a professional travel writing editor. Hear about design and print production considerations from a printer. Learn tips and strategies that will result in marketing collateral that delivers. Register now by contacting Meghan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or [mdorn@azot.gov](mailto:mdorn@azot.gov).

The workshop will be held in the following locations:

#### **Tuesday, May 13, 2008**

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

[Blazin' M Ranch](#)

Cottonwood, AZ, 86326

928-634-0334

#### **Thursday, May 15, 2008**

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

[Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort](#)

10000 N. Oracle Rd

Tucson, AZ 85704  
520-544-5000

### **SAVE the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops are here!**

In an effort to continually offer the best in visitor services to the traveling public, AOT conducts a complimentary certification program for Arizona's visitor center staff and front-line hospitality employees. The Grand Impressions program is designed to enhance customer service skills, present a unified message to visitors, and to increase knowledge of the state and its attractions. Front-line employees within the tourism industry and individuals in city, county, state and tribal government agencies that deal directly with visitors are strongly encouraged to attend these workshops. Specific program details will follow in the coming weeks!

Workshops will be held on the following dates and locations.

#### **Friday, May 30, 2008**

Holiday Inn Express  
850 W Shell Road  
Nogales, Arizona

#### **Friday, June 6, 2008**

Lowell Observatory  
1400 W Mars Hill Rd  
Flagstaff, Arizona

## **Trippin' with AOT**

### **Arizona Well Represented on German Sales Mission**

AOT recently traveled to Germany for a week-long sales mission with an eight member Arizona delegation. Hylton Fothergill, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Manager, was joined on the mission by the following partners: Scottsdale CVB, Tucson CVB, Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa, Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, Tanque Verde Ranch in Tucson, Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn, Red Rock Jeep Tours from Sedona and Antelope Canyon Tours. The mission began in Frankfurt and continued to Cologne, Hannover and Hamburg. In each location the delegates conducted training sessions and product meetings at the offices of the key tour operators, followed by sponsored evening networking events for area travel professionals. For more information on this sales mission, please contact Hylton Fothergill at 602-364-3706 or via e-mail at [hfothergill@azot.gov](mailto:hfothergill@azot.gov).

### **AOT Attends Sustainable Tourism Summit**

AOT's Director of Research AnnDee Johnson and Executive Projects Manager Laura French attended the 2008 Great Smoky Mountain Sustainable Tourism Summit in Knoxville, Tennessee. The April 28 – 29 conference included remarks from Secretary of the Interior Kempthorne, Tennessee Gov. Bredesen, Tennessee Sen. Alexander, and the nations leading experts on sustainability and sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is defined as sustaining the environment, culture and heritage of a region while at the same time sustaining the economic growth through tourism. The summit focused on protecting destinations, maintaining economic growth through tourism and providing best practices and federal and state resources.

Tennessee and North Carolina hosted the event in honor of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the nation's most visited national park. For more information or to view the forums online in the near future, please visit [www.sustainabletourismsummit.com](http://www.sustainabletourismsummit.com).

## Industry News

### TIA Calling for Improved Entry Experience

The Travel Industry Association and the Travel Business Roundtable have made recommendation to U.S. Customs and Border Protection to improve the entry experience and make the U.S. more welcoming for international visitors. The recommendations follow the recent announcement by the CBP that 18 U.S. airports will be part of a Model Ports Program. The TIA/TBR suggestions cover such areas as staffing, queue management and signage. The CPB will use \$40 million it received for the Model Ports Program to implement needed reforms at America's top international airports. (Special to TA)

### Americans Arranging Shorter Trips, Staying Closer to Home for Summer

As families across the country plan their vacations, many are downsizing out of concern over the economy, spooked by talk of a recession, the weak value of the dollar overseas and home foreclosures. Add to that air-travel delays and the rising cost of gas, and some travelers are holding off planning, in hopes of nabbing cheap deals at the last minute. Some resorts and tour operators are responding with discounts and other incentives to try to fill rooms. Close-to-home destinations like suburban water parks and regional resort towns say they're bracing for a spike in business as Americans look for fun things to do that don't require much travel. At online travel agency Travelocity, researchers say they've noticed that Americans are booking shorter trips for the summer, especially for destinations overseas. The overall average length of a trip has fallen more than 5 percent for an overseas vacation booked on the Web site. (*Page W1, Wall Street Journal, Sat.-Sun.*)

### Weak Dollar Propping up U.S. Hospitality Industry

Why is the U.S. hospitality sector of the economy remaining strong? Perhaps in large part because of the weakening U.S. dollar. More than one report cites that reason. Ernst & Young's Global Real Estate Center was among those citing it. "The continued weakness of the dollar is producing multiple beneficial effects on the U.S. hotel market which is likely to continue for the foreseeable future and which may pull the sector through current recessionary pressures," said Michael Fishbin, Ernst & Young's U.S. director, Hospitality & Leisure. According to the report, international tourists are looking to the U.S. as a prime vacation spot and are spending more money, often upgrading to higher-end and even luxury accommodations because their local currency now buys, in some cases, more than twice what it did just a few years ago. Total arrivals in the U.S. have witnessed 18 months of successive growth since April 2006, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. In the first 11 months of 2007 international visitors spent \$111.6 billion, up 13 percent from the first 11 months of 2006. Mr. Fishbin pointed to a parity between the U.S. and Canadian dollars, which has increased Canadian spending power south of the border, and to the euro, which has strengthened from one euro per dollar to 0.66 euros per dollar in recent months. The same exchange rate economics also benefit foreign business travelers who are now able to leverage the strength of their home currencies to take longer stays in the U.S., according to Mr. Fishbin. (*Report by David Wilkening, TravelMole e-Newsletter*)

### International Visits Up 11% in January

The Commerce Department says 3.4 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in January, an increase of 11 percent over January 2007. International visitors spent a record \$11.38 billion in

the U.S., up 23 percent from January 2007. Overseas arrivals increased 9 percent over January 2007, with visitation from Western Europe up 11 percent. Arrivals from the U.K. were up almost 5 percent in January following solid growth in 2007. Canadian visitation was up 13 percent for the month, with air arrivals up 9 percent. Arrivals from Mexico among those traveling to interior U.S. points were up 10 percent with air arrivals down 9 percent. Details at [www.tinet.ita.doc.gov](http://www.tinet.ita.doc.gov).  
(*Special to TA*)

### **Survey: Travel Plans Holding up for Higher Income Households**

A survey of more than 2,000 frequent travelers conducted in April for Travel + Leisure magazine indicated that higher-income consumers are continuing to make plans to travel on leisure in the next 12 months, and that their spending plans for the most part are holding up. A total of 89 percent of respondents, whose median household income was \$100,718, said they plan to travel within the U.S. in the next 12 months. And 65 percent of respondents said they planned to travel internationally. Top destinations for planned domestic travel were, in order, California, Florida, New York, Nevada, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington. Top destinations for planned international travel were, in order: the Caribbean, Mexico, Europe, Asia and Canada. ([www.TravelWeekly.com](http://www.TravelWeekly.com), 5/1)